BOOK REVIEWS

John M. Porter, MD, Book Review Section Editor

Surgery of the carotid and vertebral arteries for the prevention of stroke

Allan Callow; Baltimore; 1996; Williams & Wilkins; 434 pages.

A product of years of experience, careful research, and thoughtful reflection, Allan Callow's *Surgery of the carotid and vertebral arteries for the prevention of stroke* is a refreshing and welcome addition to the vascular surgery literature. Unlike most surgical texts written by scores of authors with varying skills and styles, this work is authored entirely by Dr. Callow, an experienced writer and teacher with a gift for clarity, simplicity, and organization. The book is arranged into a series of essays that explore in depth the major topics that relate to cerebrovascular disease. The lively text is extensively referenced and neatly illustrated. Although replete with data and scholarly discussions of difficult topics, the text flows logically from one subject to the next and is best appreciated by a thorough reading, cover to cover.

As one would expect from the title, the text describes most known operations for the treatment of carotid and vertebral disease. In addition to these chapters, which are well illustrated, sections devoted to peripheral nerve injuries, anesthetic technique, and postoperative complications are complete and authoritative. Of even greater interest, however, are the chapters devoted to the pathogenesis and the clinical manifestations of cerebrovascular disease. In the chapter on Atherogenesis, Dr. Callow has presented a synopsis of the current theories regarding the formation of the atherosclerotic plaque. In this chapter, as in others, he is writing as a surgeon-teacher, intertwining personal observations, clinical studies, and advanced molecular biology research. This chapter alone has more than 150 references and is written in a style that can be appreciated by students and surgeons at any level of experience. An excellent chapter on Arteritides and Other Angiopathies and another on trauma compliment the extensive material on atherosclerotic causes of cerebrovascular disease.

The chapter titled Clinical Spectrum explores the relationship between cerebrovascular disease and neurologic syndromes, with information not commonly found in surgical texts. There one can find, for example, discussions of the pathophysiology of the various clinical manifestations of amaurosis fugax, middle cerebral artery syndrome, and vertebrobasilar insufficiency. The opening chapter on the history, costs, and social impact of stroke, as well as a later chapter on the epidemiology of stroke, appropriately frame the more academic sections, reminding us that this information is only of value if it can be used to prevent the devastation caused by stroke, a disease that is crippling not only to individuals but to society as a whole.

As pointed out in the foreword by Dr. Jerry Goldstone, a single-author text of this quality is rare. Few would have the experience, the intellectual capability, or the writing and organizational skills to produce such a work. We are grateful that Dr. Callow has taken the time and effort to amass his information and present it to us so clearly. This book is truly a classic that should be in the library of anyone remotely interested in cerebrovascular disease. Moreover, it is a text that should be read and reread, not only for the knowledge it contains but for the inspiration in imparts.

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Essential surgical practice

A. Cuschieri, G. R. Giles, and A. R. Moossa; Oxford, U.K.; 1995; Butterworth-Heinemann; 1656 pages; $150.

Essential surgical practice is an internationally authored and edited text printed in the United Kingdom. It is clearly written and has a greater text-to-illustration ratio than most of the well-known surgical texts published in this country. The authors describe it as a book designed for postgraduate trainees "during the formative part of their careers." They emphasize principles and rationale of pathophysiology of surgical disease in a manner that will appeal to students at all levels. In fact, the first one third of the book is precisely that, with 29 chapters of pathophysiology and care for the surgical patient. Some of these chapters are brief and simplistic, but others are excellent, clear treatises on basic topics such as that dealing with DNA Technology, Genetics, and Cancer.

The remaining two thirds of the book is equally divided between General Surgery and the subspecialties. Some of these chapters are too brief and limited for the important topic they present, such as the 16-page chapter on all Breast Surgery. In most cases there is little or no elaboration of the technical aspects of surgical procedures available for the treatment of the condition discussed. As a result, this is not a text that will appeal to more-advanced surgical residents or to operating surgeons. Vascular surgery receives short treatment (5 pages on aneurysmal disease, 6 on carotid conditions) and has little new material of interest to vascular surgeons.

There are some flaws in details of production, such as upside down photographs and transposed legends that are a distraction. Many of the illustrations emphasize surface views of patients and specimens that are reminiscent of older texts regarding physical signs in surgical disease. These also will be of more interest to students than to more sophisticated surgical house staff and practicing surgeons.

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